


ON ORTHODOXY TO THEODOSIUS

A "Public Oration" written by Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, addressed to the devout Emperor Theodosius on the subject of orthodox faith in our Lord Jesus Christ

OU, CHRIST-LOVING emperors, are the very pinnacle of human glory, a status that is incomparably far and away above everything else in the world. God has laid upon you a responsibility that is both remarkable and fitting, and your earthly prerogative parallels the universal transcendence that is unique to him. Every knee bends before him,¹ whether of thrones, rulers, principalities, or authorities.² They submit their necks in servitude and honor him continually with fitting praises, saying that "heaven and earth are full of his glory."³ Anyone can see in the serenity of your faces a perfectly transparent image of such manifest and incomparable importance. Because there is nothing on earth above you, you are the fountainheads of mortal honor, the root and source of all human prosperity. Whosoever submit themselves to your royal scepter are guided thereby towards a lawful, admirable, and praiseworthy life by the beneficent nods of your authority, whereas those who do not accept your yoke will quickly fall, brought low by the might that is invested in you. As soon as the royal arms strike, their armies are routed and utterly destroyed; they immediately cast aside their foolishness and beg for mercy upon their knees. Hence your warlike and battle-hardened troops are undefeated and have conquered every part of the world. You are the object of song and of tales of renown in the

1. Is 45.23.

2. Col 1.16.

3. Is 6.3.

East as in the West; neither Southerners nor even the inhabitants of the remote North ever slacken in crowning you with their joyous voices. Furthermore, it is our Lord Jesus Christ himself who is the unshakeable foundation of your godly and pure government. It is through him, as it is written, that "rulers rule and the powerful exercise justice."⁴ His will is supreme, and the successful accomplishment of every good action lies within his gift. Upon those who love him he gladly bestows the very best of all that is most precious and wonderful. I take as a sufficient proof of what I have claimed all the things that have already been granted to your rule and all that we believe is yet to be granted. I shall attempt as far as I can to expound from the Holy Scriptures themselves, albeit in brief, that being renowned for godly devotion is, in fact, the unshakeable foundation of the glory of a king.

2. Many people became rulers in the land of the Jews at various times and occupied the throne of that kingdom. Some of them were profane individuals, with no interest in fearing God, who reduced the administration of justice to lawlessness. These wretched and vicious kings plunged themselves into a deep pit of godlessness and so met equally vicious ends. After all, it is a disastrous thing to fall out with God, and to insult him in any way at all is entirely beyond the pale. But then there were other rulers who valued godliness, who loyally took pains to follow his good pleasure, and so were able effortlessly to defeat their enemies and conquer their opponents. One such was Josiah, who got rid of worshipers who offered sacrifice to idols in sacred groves and high places, who outlawed every kind of witchcraft and false prophecy, and who brought devilish and deceitful revelries to an end. By acting in this way he caused his own reign to be worthy of great renown, lauded by the ancients, and a source of wonder to moderns, at least to those who know how to value what pleases the mind of God. Notwithstanding the fact that your ancestors and you yourselves have acted quite rightly in this department, I reckon it may still be appropriate to mention what wise King Hezekiah accomplished back then, for the mor-

4. Prv 8.15.

al of that story too would be of immeasurable benefit to your godly rule.

3. There was a man from Babylon in Persia named Rhapsaces who, so the story goes, conquered the whole of Judah.⁵ He first overran Samaria and then fell upon Jerusalem itself with a vast army under his command. He had a phalanx of cavalry (difficult to control, equally difficult to withstand) and hoplite foot soldiers as numerous as grains of sand. Haughty beyond measure and full of barbarian arrogance, he brought siege machines and all the material of war against its walls. He promised to capture the holy city with the same force that he had used against all the other cities, and he defied them with unrepeatable insults, throwing abuse at them and giving rein to his intemperate and unbridled tongue against God. He said that, even if God did want to save them, they would be insane to trust in him for succor. When people then came and told the king all about what this perverse man with his Persian arrogance had dared to say, he was visibly pained by such godless blasphemies and thought carefully about the prophecy that the city would be captured. So he donned the appropriate garments and ascended to God's temple and there openly assuaged the divine wrath by his prayers and absolved himself of any guilt arising from these blasphemies. And the result? He once again made the Lord of Hosts well-disposed and propitious; he defeated the Assyrian, despite not being armed for battle with well-trained cavalry nor having the use of skilled marksmanship or of spearmen, and with absolutely no tactical experience. Rather, by divine decree alone, the whole Assyrian army was sent to its doom in a single night. "The angel of the Lord went out," it says, "and did away with 185,000 of the Assyrian force. And when they got up in the morning, they found all the dead bodies."⁶ This is the fruit of godly religion and of taking no notice of any voice that is set against God's own glory.

5. See 2 Kgs 18–19 and Is 36–37. The old Greek translation of Kings understood the Hebrew word *Rab-Shakeh* to be the name of the Assyrian general, as also did all early modern translations. The word is in fact an Assyrian term for a military commander and is usually so translated in modern versions.

6. 2 Kgs 19.35; Is 37.36.

4. I am of the opinion that what should pass the king's pious ears ought never to be godless or blasphemous, but rather those things that render God his due and fitting praise, things that are wholly above any censure or reproof. So, seeing that I have what is best at heart, I am necessarily spurred on to put down in this book the tradition of the true and apostolic faith, by way of offering some spiritual gift to your majesty, and also to the truly God-loving Empresses, whose refulgence is second only to your own calm serenity. One of them exults in those children of yours, for whom so many prayers were offered, and so brings to your throne the hope of permanence; the other boasts in her fruitful chastity and takes her share of the burdens of your renowned kingship.⁷ Although those renowned crowns of yours are lit up by precious stones from India, nonetheless what really provides ornament to the perceptive mind and soul is an orthodox and unblemished faith. Because you hold onto this faith so boldly, I present this work as a foundation for your intelligence, a light for your soul, and a crown for your heart. For it is written, "Wisdom is better than precious stones; nothing is her equal in value."⁸ So I will try to speak briefly about how the Only-Begotten was made man and what the mystery about it really is. We can try to do this as well as we may, but only so far as is permitted to those who are looking into a mirror and an enigma and whose knowledge is only partial,⁹ indeed is limited by the extent of the assistance that the Spirit provides.¹⁰ Thus Paul himself, as God's mouthpiece, writes, "No one says, Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit, and no one says, Let Jesus be anathema, except by Beelzebul."¹¹

5. But it is possible that someone will retort, "Seeing as you are seeking to enter into battle with this subject and have the gall to undertake such a burdensome task, please give us a

7. These empresses were Theodosius's wife, Eudocia, and his sister, Pulcheria. The latter was considerably older than her brother and was in many ways the true power behind the throne. It was vital for Cyril to win the favor of these powerful women, and for this reason he addressed another treatise *On Orthodoxy* especially to them.

8. Prv 8.11.

10. Eph 4.7; Phil 1.19.

9. 1 Cor 13.12.

11. 1 Cor 12.3.

clear and definite Christology that is precise, honest, and cannot be gainsaid." For different people are intoxicated by different sorts of ideas and thereby disfigure the divine revelations on this subject that are found in the New and the Old Testaments. We know perfectly well there is no doctrine that these madmen have not experimented with. They fall so very readily into the "depths" of hell,¹² as it is written, and into the snare of death, "knowing neither what they are saying nor what they are making assertions about."¹³ So we now have to work our way through the nonsense and pompous arguments that each of these groups has produced.

6. Some people have dared to believe and to claim that the Word of God the Father did appear as a man, but that he did not bear the flesh of the Holy Virgin, the Mother-of-God; instead, they misrepresent him as being nothing but a semblance of the mystery.¹⁴ There are then others who allege that they would be embarrassed to appear to be worshiping a man, and so refuse to crown earthly flesh with heavenly honor. A mixture of excessive ignorance and baseless scruples leads them, in their sickness, to argue that the Word, which was begotten of God the Father, was transformed into a nature constituted of bones, nerves, and flesh. These wretched types ridicule the idea that Emmanuel was born of a virgin, and they condemn as being positively indecent the wonderful dispensation that is so proper to the divine.¹⁵ There is another group that has believed God the Word, he who is co-eternal with the Father, to have been a latecomer and to have been called into existence only at the very moment when he was "allocated the job" of being born in the flesh.¹⁶ There are still others who are led to such a point of ungodly insanity that they claim that the Word does not have

12. Prv 9.18.

13. 1 Tm 1.7.

14. Cyril is thinking of the Docetism of the Gnostics insofar as their doctrine was understood by the patristic tradition.

15. This is the view discussed in Athanasius's *Letter to Epictetus*, an authority and a text closely followed by Cyril throughout the Nestorian controversy.

16. "allocated the job": Cyril is using an expression from ancient Athenian politics for the allocation of ministerial tasks by lot.

his own concrete existence, but that it was a mere "verbal expression" that became a man, a sound that does not mean anything until it is actually uttered. Marcellus and Photinus were among their number.¹⁷ It seems right to others also to believe that the Only-Begotten became a man and that he also became flesh, but that this assumed flesh was never completely endowed with a rational soul that has a mind like our own. They bind the Word of God together with the temple of the holy Virgin into a single unity, or so they aver, and then assert that the Word dwelt in this temple and that he made the assumed body his very own, himself filling the place left by the rational and thinking soul.¹⁸ Others again proclaim quite the opposite to this last group and turn their ideas on their heads.¹⁹ They affirm that Emmanuel is constituted and formed from God the Word together with a rational soul and a body, that is, a truly complete humanity, but that does not mean that their Christology is actually healthy or faultless, for they divide the single Christ into two, introduce a gross division between them, and so represent each one of them as having a separate existence. They maintain that one of these parts is completely human and was born of a virgin, while the other one is the Word of God the Father. They never really specify what is meant by the nature of the Word and the nature of the flesh, nor do they wish to dwell on the different expressions themselves (although on this point they do no injustice to the true doctrine, since divine and carnal natures are not identical). Yet they set the one apart as a separate and individual man, call the other one God and the genuine natural Son, and then at the same time still call themselves Christians! Here are the exact words they dared to write in composing their little pamphlets on the subject:

17. Marcellus of Ancyra, convicted of Sabellianism, taught that the Son was a "mere word," an emanation from the Father that became Logos and Son only at the Incarnation; Photinus said that the Word existed in God as does a (human) "word" in a person, whereas the "Son" did not pre-exist the Incarnation (see Epiphanius, *Panarion* 71-72).

18. Cyril always had to take great pains to distance his own position from that of Apollinarius described here.

19. Cyril ends his heresiology with a longer discussion of Nestorianism.

The one is truly and by nature the Son, the Word of God the Father, while the other is son only by homonymy. The Word of the Father (he later adds) is not flesh but took upon himself a man. For the Only-Begotten is essentially and on his own account the Son of God, who created everything; but the man which he assumed, although not God by nature, may be given the Son's name homonymously because the Son of God truly did take it onto himself. For the verse "No one knows the Son except the Father"²⁰ shows that the Son is truly and by nature [begotten] of the Father, whereas Gabriel's message, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor in God's sight; and behold, you will conceive in the womb and bear a son, and you will call his name Jesus,"²¹ applies rather more to the manhood.

[A. Docetism]

7. But although this is their position, it is not ours. How so? Because the arguments of the heterodox are never going to persuade those who are traveling on the straight path to switch to a road that twists and turns in the wrong direction. It would take an enormous amount of time if someone wanted to develop lengthy arguments against each of these points in turn and carry their inquiry right through to its conclusion, and this would hardly be time well spent; in fact, he would have to endure a heavy sweat while barely staying on the straight and narrow. So we must put aside any thought of disputing at great length or in much detail, and just try to launch a minor investigation against each heresy. Let us turn first of all to the Docetists and say to them, "You are mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures," nor "the great mystery of godliness," namely, Christ, "who was manifest in the flesh, was justified in the Spirit, was seen with the angels, was proclaimed among the nations, was believed on in the world, and was raised up to glory."²² These enemies must of necessity either propose a statement of faith that would have been shameful to our predecessors, thereby calling the teachers of the faith liars (the very ones whom Christ commanded to "go and teach all nations"),²³ or else, if they shudder at the thought of doing such a thing,

20. Mt 11.27.

21. Lk 1.30, 31.

22. Mt 22.29; 1 Tm 3.16.

23. Mt 28.19.

then they should elect to adopt a sound Christology, say farewell to their own foolishness, hold fast to the Holy Scriptures, and set themselves upon the straight path of the saints, so as to arrive at the actual truth.

8. This “mystery of godliness” is for us, I believe, none other than the very Word of God the Father, who “was manifest in the flesh.”²⁴ He was born of the holy Virgin, the Mother-of-God, and “took the nature of a servant.”²⁵ He was seen by the angels who celebrated at his birth, “Glory to God in the highest, and peace upon earth, goodwill among men.”²⁶ Moreover, they pointed out to the shepherds that God the Word had come for us in the flesh when they said, “Behold, today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be the sign: you shall find a baby wrapped up and lying in a manger.”²⁷ Given the particular circumstances of his birth from a virgin and his physical act of becoming visible, surely it is a useless notion, complete stuff and nonsense, to slur the wholly transparent plan of salvation with the title of “semblance”? For if it were nothing but a shadow and a semblance, rather than a genuine incarnation, and if the Virgin did not really give birth, then the Word of God the Father did not take upon himself the seed of Abraham, and neither has he become like his brothers.²⁸ For our own situation is nothing like a shadow or a “semblance.” Rather, we dwell in tangible and visible bodies, and so, because we are clothed in this earthly body, we are susceptible to physical sensation and decay.

9. So unless the Word became flesh, he would not “be able to help those who are being tempted because he himself suffered and was tempted.”²⁹ A shadow cannot feel pain. The fact of his being “with us” would mean nothing at all. That back of his that he offered on our behalf—what sort of back was it?³⁰ That cheek that he exposed to his assailants and which endured lashes from the Jews—what sort of cheek was it?³¹ Those nails that were driv-

24. 1 Tm 3.16.

26. Lk 2.14.

28. Heb 2.16, 17.

30. Is 50.6.

25. Phil 2.7.

27. Lk 2.11, 12.

29. Heb 2.18.

31. Ibid.

en through his hands and feet, how can we possibly think of this as happening to one whose appearance was not really physical? That side of his that Pilate's soldiers pierced and from which those who were watching saw his precious blood flowing out with water—what sort of side was it?³² If I have to go on like this, then Christ neither died for us nor was he raised again. Were we to allow this viewpoint, our faith would have become empty; the cross, which is the salvation and life of the world, would have vanished; and all hope for those who have fallen asleep in the faith utterly destroyed. The blessed Paul saw it this way as well. He said, "Above all I have passed on to you what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and that Cephas, and then the twelve, saw him; later more than five hundred brothers at once saw him, of whom the majority are even now alive, although some have fallen asleep; then James saw him; then all the apostles; last of all, as if an afterbirth, even I saw him."³³ And again, a little further on, "If it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is empty, and empty also is our faith. We will be found to be false witnesses of God, because we have witnessed about God, that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise—if indeed the dead are not raised."³⁴ Tell me, then, how does a shadow die? How could the Father have raised up Christ if he were a shadow and a "semblance" and as such could not be bound by death's snares? Get rid of their vomit! Let us reckon their opinions as naught but fables and the dregs of an unholy mind. These are just the sort of people that our Savior's disciple was warning us against when he wrote, "for many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you recognize the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is what you heard about the

32. Jn 19:34.

33. 1 Cor 15:3–8.

34. 1 Cor 15:12–15.

Antichrist, that he is coming and is now already in the world.”³⁵ You see, if he did not become a man, then he has also not ascended in the flesh to his God and Father in heaven, nor will he return to us from heaven, namely, physically, as a man.

[B. Theomorphism]

10. Then there is the opinion held by others out of their infinite stupidity, that the Word that was begotten of God declined to be born by means of the holy Virgin, thereby holding human nature in contempt, but that instead he was transformed into earthly flesh. These folk are blaspheming against God’s way of salvation and like to find fault with his plans. For the Word, who is the Creator of all and rich in mercy, emptied himself for us and became a man,³⁶ “born of a woman,”³⁷ so that, “since the children are partakers of flesh and blood”—that is, we are—“so he also likewise might partake of the same things so that, by death, he might defeat the one who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who were held in slavery all their lives by their fear of death.”³⁸ That is what Holy Scripture says. They are thereby claiming that his totally perfect and wonderful plan is unworthy of him, as if their own ideas were some sort of improvement, and they find fault with his wise plans. They say that we should not accuse the Only-Begotten of having been involved with a woman’s labor pains.³⁹ Instead (they say) we ought to think that the Word’s nature was transformed into a rotten and earth-born body, and they imagine some transformation in the one who knows no change. The divine nature is firmly fixed in its own virtues, and its essential inner permanence is unshakeable. A nature that is created and that has come to exist within time might indeed experience alteration, and this fact is perfectly in line with appropriate and valid argu-

35. 1 Jn 4.1–3.

36. Phil 2.7.

37. Gal 4.4.

38. Heb 2.14, 15.

39. Clem. Alex., *Strom.* 7.16, describes the debate over whether Mary truly experienced labor. Clement himself took the more “gnostic” position that she did not (that is, virginity remained *post partum*); theologians fighting gnostic ideas would tend to the opposite view, as, e.g., Tertullian, and Cyril here.

ments, since anything whose lot it is to have a beginning to its existence is necessarily changeable in virtue of what is already sown within it. But God, who is beyond all intellect, generation, and corruption, has an existence that completely transcends all notion of change. And just as by the logic of his own nature he stands above and beyond everything that has been called into being, and that to an unparalleled degree, so he also stands over and above the things that normally happen to such created beings. He has no knowledge or experience of things that harm. So the Godhead exists in unchangeable perfection, while created things constantly experience flux and change. The prophet Jeremiah was well aware of this and, seeing as he was a good philosopher, declared of God, "You dwell forever while we perish forever,"⁴⁰ since the Godhead sits upon his own throne, ever ruling and governing the universe without being subject to any sensation, while we, having as we do natures that are so readily altered and altogether prone to changing, "perish forever"; that is, we are at any and every moment subject to decay and change. Indeed, no external accidents ever cause the Godhead to undergo even the slightest transformation to his own permanence. Furthermore, a nature that decays and changes, that is, one that has been created, may never be enriched by an inherent resistance to change, nor may a creature ever boast in the virtues of the divine nature as if they were its own. If it tried to, it would deserve to be told, "What do you have that you have not received?"⁴¹ The fact that the nature of the Word is altogether unalterable and unchangeable, while all that comes to be is changeable, was the subject of an especially apt lament made by the psalmist in the spirit of the blessed David: "The heavens are destroyed, but you remain; all things wear out like a garment, and like a piece of clothing you discard them, and they are thrown out; but you are the same and your years know no end."⁴² How can it possibly be that the Word of God remained ever the same if it is also true to say that he gave up being wholly immoveable and descended into something that at one time

40. Bar 3.3.

41. 1 Cor 4.7.

42. Ps 102.26-27 (101.27-28 LXX).

did not exist, that he was transformed into a physical nature, something that was born to die? Surely any such suggestion is total madness. There can be no doubt about it.

11. It is time now to set against those people's foolish ideas something yet more foolish, for surely it is just as likely that an earthly body might someday gain the power to rise up to the divine nature and acquire the constitution of that Being that is above everything. After all, if the divine nature can itself be turned into a physical one, which is what those abovementioned idiots suggested, then why should there be any reason for a body not to rise above its own lowly nature and remold itself into the Divinity, into the Highest Being? But for us, we prefer to follow the Holy Scriptures than to oblige their lunacy with any credence. The prophet says, "Behold, the Virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will give him the name Emmanuel,"⁴³ and because this prophecy was then authenticated by blessed Gabriel when he explained the heavenly decree to the Virgin by saying, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus,"⁴⁴ we therefore believe that Emmanuel truly was born of a woman and do not thereby reject the magnificent honor that belongs to the human nature. This is orthodox doctrine, for it was not his own nature that the Only-Begotten took hold of (for this would not have benefited our condition at all), nor was it an angelic nature, but, as the Scripture says, it was "the seed of Abraham."⁴⁵ For it was thus, and not in any other way, that the race that had fallen into decay could be saved.

[C. Arianism]

12. What! Is there not something else that should cause us to be shocked?⁴⁶ There are some who have all but taken their leave

43. Is 7.14.

44. Lk 1.30, 31.

45. Heb 2.16.

46. There is some uncertainty about this chapter. Does it belong with the discussion of Theomorphism in the previous chapters, or does Chapter Twelve appear to be part of the refutation of Theomorphism? It speaks of a doctrine of the Son coming into being at the Incarnation, a belief usually associated with

of the inspired Scriptures and are giving up their own minds to the spirits of error, who have fallen into misguided ideas and puerile idiocies because they reckon that the Creator of the ages, God the Word, who is co-eternal with God the Father, must have begun his existence only at that moment when the flesh actually came into being, that the one who is beyond all eternity and time made his appearance only as a late-comer, that it is only in more recent history, at the time of the Incarnation, that God became a Father, and that it was only then that he interjected, so to speak, by means of that temple born of the Virgin,⁴⁷ the very one through whom and in whom are all things, into a state of being and having his own concrete existence. Surely these folk have charged right up to the very peak of evil when they give rein to such a silly, execrable fiction⁴⁸ and fill their minds with pure stupidity? Truly “their throats are an open grave; they deceive with their tongues; the poison of snakes is under their lips; and their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”⁴⁹ Yet the one through whom all things came to be must surely also have existed before all things. What can they possibly do with this citation from John? “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; he existed in the beginning with God; all things came about through him, and apart from him nothing came about that did come about,”⁵⁰ and also, “the one who was from the beginning, whom we heard, whom we caught sight of with our eyes, whom we saw, whom our hands touched, concerning the Word of Life—and this life appeared, and we saw and witnessed it, and proclaimed to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and which appeared among us.”⁵¹ Christ himself indicated to the Jews that

Marcellus and Photinus, the subjects of the next section. According to Hilary, *De Trin.* 10.50–51, however, the two beliefs formed some sort of continuum, and Cyril does not separate them too radically.

47. “temple”: theologians of Cyril’s day frequently use the term “the temple” to refer to the physical manifestation of the Logos on earth. Although it is not a term used by modern theologians, it will be found throughout these treatises.

48. 1 Tm 4.7.

49. Rom 3.13, 14 (but quoted from the Septuagint version of Ps 13.3).

50. Jn 1.1–3.

51. 1 Jn 1.1–3.

his own existence extended back into the mists of time, since when they exclaimed, "You are not yet fifty years old, yet you have seen Abraham!" the reply they got back was, "Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am."⁵² Here we have something about whom we can say both "he was" and "I am" without adding any predicates—who can possibly perceive a moment when such a one first came into existence? How could he who has existed above all intellect from the beginning allow himself to be brought into existence at a particular time? If anyone wanted to take up these questions at leisure, it would be quite straightforward to deploy texts from the inspired Scriptures that would do great damage to these hare-brained ideas of theirs. It is barely worth bothering about what is so plainly unsound and so easily refuted. So let us turn now instead to a doctrine that is of a type with those we have already convicted.

[D. Marcellianism]

13. Some people falsify the beauty of the truth, as if they were minting false coin, "exalting their horn to the heavens and speaking unrighteousness against God,"⁵³ as the Scripture says. They imagine that the Only-Begotten did not have real being or subsist as an individual, that he did not have his own concrete existence. The wretches suggest that he is but a sound, merely a "word" pronounced by God which makes its dwelling in a man; they imply that Jesus, notwithstanding that he is holier than all the saints, is still not actually God. It is just as our Savior's disciple asked, "Who is the liar, if not he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This man is the antichrist, who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son has not the Father, but the one who confesses the Son has the Father also."⁵⁴ They are both recognized through each other, and each in the other, and that both for humans and the holy angels. Nobody can inquire as to what a father is unless he presupposes mentally a son who subsists and is begotten; and vice versa, nobody can inquire into what a son may be unless he clearly realizes that there is a fa-

52. Jn 8.57.

53. Ps 75.5 (74.6 LXX).

54. 1 Jn 2.22-23.

ther who begets. I would argue that we must surely say that, if the Son is unreal, then it follows of necessity that neither can one truly think of the Father as a father. Where is the father who has not actually had a child? Similarly, if the child he begot neither subsisted nor existed at all, then the child would not be anything, since for something not to subsist is in fact not to be at all; it amounts to total non-being. The consequence would be that God is the Father of non-being.

14. Well then, my dear friends, if I had a chance to talk to these interpreters, I would tell them, "Your ideas are so much pointless nonsense; if that is not the case, then answer me this question: how is the love that God the Father has for us anything extraordinary? If he gave the Son for us, the one that according to you has no separate existence, then he has given us a non-being; neither has the Word become flesh, nor suffered the precious cross, nor rendered death impotent, nor risen to life again. If, as you have it, he is non-being and unreal, how can any of these things be? The message of Holy Scripture has deceived the faithful, and the assurance of faith has come to naught. What then? Does the holy word not indicate to us that the Son exists in the form of God, and does it not say that he is the image and representation of the one who has begotten him?⁵⁵ Everyone surely, at the very least, agrees that images are like their archetypes; it could not possibly be otherwise. If, then, the image does not have its own concrete existence, or the representation is thought not to exist on its own account, then one must admit from force of logic that the one from whom the character derives is also without concrete existence, and the dishonor of the image redounds completely upon the archetype.

15. Tell me whether Philip, that keen disciple of Christ, when he asked, "Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us,"⁵⁶ expected to see a Father who is and who subsists or one who is neither? I think there is no doubt that the answer would have to be the former. If the Son is a non-being without subsistence, as the unbridled effrontery of those people suggests, why

55. Phil 2.6; Heb 1.3.

56. Jn 14.8.

would he present himself to us as the image and exact representation of the Father, when he said, "I have been with you such a long time, Philip, and yet you do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? I and the Father are one"?⁵⁷ I do not reckon that one can discern something that subsists within something that does not, nor can anyone believe that what is could be the same as what is not. If so, then how could the Father be "in the Son," or the Son "in the Father"? Are we not driven to the conclusion that, if the Word does not exist on his own account, then the Father is himself in danger because he would have a non-being within himself and would himself be thought of as existing within a non-being? In short, whatever does not completely and properly exist can only be considered as a non-being. This argument is very uneven (and suffers enormously from incoherence), but nonetheless this dogma of our opponents does result in these incongruities. It would not be unreasonable to be rather surprised to learn that the Father managed to create what exists by means of a Son who does not. Again, if you were to ask whether it is better to exist or not, surely you would say straight off that the former is better. The one who grants being to things that once did not exist is considered good, and the Creator. This is how things should naturally be. Hence the creature must be better off than the one through whom all things were brought into being, since the latter is said not to subsist, while the others do subsist and are thought of as having existence. What utter tripe! Get rid of such blasphemy! As it is written, "The Word of God is living and active."⁵⁸ He also says, "I am the life,"⁵⁹ yet if he does not subsist, how could he be reckoned as "life"? No, he is Life by his very nature, and he never lies. To deny that the Word begotten of God subsists is a rotten lie, the dregs of a witless mind. He said himself to Moses, "I am the one that is."⁶⁰ How could anyone think for a moment that the one who truly is is not secure in his own concrete existence? Therefore, we can reasonably write off those who put forward such arguments as the most ignorant of all.

57. Jn 14.9-10.

59. Jn 14.6.

58. Heb 4.12.

60. Ex 3.14.

[E. Apollinarianism]

16. Those of us who have been taught how to search out the truth equally do not approve of those who argue that the flesh which was united to the Word was devoid of a rational soul. They introduce into the universe a Word clothed with flesh that is accorded only living and sensible motion, while they attribute the activity of mind and soul to the Only-Begotten. They fear—I know not why—to confess that the Word is united by nature to human flesh endowed with a rational soul. They seem to think that the tradition of our ancient faith has no firm grounding, and instead reckon they ought to follow their own desires and all-too-human arguments. Their ignorant opinions are truly “contrary to what one ought to think.”⁶¹ And what are the grounds of their position? Let me explain. From our position, we say that the “mediator between God and men,”⁶² as the Scripture expresses it, is composed of a manhood that is like our own, complete according to its proper definition, and the Son, that is, the Only-Begotten, who is by nature manifested from the Father. We maintain that a convergence occurred, an indescribable concurrence that brought about a unity between otherwise unequal and dissimilar natures, although we recognize a single Christ, Lord, and Son, at the same time both God and man, both in reality and conceptually. We continue to hold that this unity is wholly unbreakable, since we believe that the Only-Begotten and the firstborn are the same individual, the Only-Begotten insofar as he is the Word of God the Father who appeared from his very essence, and firstborn insofar as he became a man and was one “among many brothers.”⁶³ “Just as there is one God the Father, from whom are all things, so also there is one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things.”⁶⁴ For we recognize that the Word, through whom all things exist, is God by nature, even when he became flesh, that is to say, a man.

17. At no point, however, do their theories on this subject match our own. You see, although even they concede that there

61. Rom 12.3.

63. Rom 8.29.

62. 1 Tm 2.5.

64. 1 Cor 8.6.

is a single Jesus Christ and reject any division of Emmanuel into two as being a wholly profane thing to do, they continue nonetheless to claim that the Word of God has been united to a flesh that is stripped of any human, rational soul. There is, they reckon, a plausible argument to prove this. They argue that what converged and combined into a single complete entity were parts, and incomplete parts at that, seeing as an existent that is complete on its own account or in its own nature should not have to be [constituted as] a combination of [incomplete] parts.⁶⁵ They go on therefore to argue that one should avoid saying that the temple that was united to the Word was [already] a complete man, so as to preserve the genuine and absolute nature of the combination that we think of as applying to Christ. And they would, I think, add the following argument as well: if Emmanuel is composed of a perfect man and the Word who is from the Father, then there is a significant risk attached, and in fact this may necessarily entail conceiving and speaking of two Sons, and even of two Christs, even if that is not our intention. How can we respond [to this argument]? Firstly, it is not appropriate to offend by pedantic quibbling the ancient tradition of the faith that was passed down to us from the holy apostles themselves,⁶⁶ nor to subject what lies beyond the intellect to a detailed investigation, nor to barge into the middle of a debate and rashly make judgments such as, "This argument is the right one, while that is the wrong one." It were better by far to leave the path of our own considerations in the hands of God, who is all-wise, rather than profanely to critique what he has sanctioned. For we shall take heed of what [the Scripture] clearly says, "My counsels are not like your counsels, nor are your ways like my ways, but as far as the heaven is from the earth, so far is my way from your ways and your thoughts from my thoughts."⁶⁷

65. Combination (*synthesis*) refers to the Aristotelian theory of mixtures set out in *De generatione et corruptione* 1.10 and elsewhere; although Aristotle himself used the term *synthesis* technically to mean a composition of elements that is only a spatial juxtaposition, he elsewhere uses the term loosely of any one of the various kinds of combinations that he distinguishes.

66. Reading *katalupein*, a distinctively Cyrilline expression, for *kataluein*.

67. Is 55.8.

18.⁶⁸ We shall never worship two sons, nor speak of two Christs, despite the fact that we believe that the temple which has been united to the Word is endowed with a rational soul.⁶⁹ Even if, following what they see as the right line of argument, even if they were to say [that the union is made up] separately of the flesh and the Word that comes from God the Father, they would not be compelled thereby to confess a duality of Christs on account of having separated out the flesh and the Only-Begotten;⁷⁰ so in just the same way we also say that “the Word of God adapted himself and was united, in a way that can be neither expressed nor conceived, with a complete humanity like our own, in accordance with the logic of his own nature,” without thereby thinking of this as a duality of sons; instead, [we think of him as] one and the same individual, being as he is God by nature, issuing from the very substance of God the Father, who in these last stages of history became a man, who was born

68. A chapter is probably missing here. In the parallel text, *De Incarnatione*, Cyril adds a further answer to his rhetorical question in ch. 17: “Then, what wise men have found to be reasonable in these matters is found in fact to be wholly useless and foolish, for if one opts to strip that divine temple of a rational soul, then a convergence will in no way come about from two incomplete [parts]. It is generally accepted that in the case of a whole person, i.e., body and soul, the soul on its own is only a part. But in the case of God the Word, my friends, this cannot be thought of as a part of something, nor as being incomplete, since he is perfect in his own nature. Where, then, is the convergence into a single complete being from two incomplete parts, if [it results] from the Word that is complete and the flesh that is not, insofar as this is what leads to the definition of a whole man who is complete in accordance with his own nature?” It may well be that the passage in question was deemed to yield too much to the Apollinarian argument and so was dropped by Cyril when he rewrote the *De Incarnatione* into the *De Recta Fide ad Theodosium*. On the other hand, the Armenian translation has the missing passage, and there is an obvious gap in the sense without it. See G.-M. de Durand, ed., *Deux dialogues christologiques*, Sources chrétiennes 97 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1964), 520–21.

69. *De Incarnatione* has this: “despite the fact that we believe that the convergence of Emmanuel into a unity was brought about from a perfect man and God the Word.”

70. *De Incarnatione* adds, “They accept Emmanuel as the one Lord Jesus Christ—and in this they perceive to think aright.” This may be another case of Cyril’s sensitiveness to the accusation of Apollinarianism, which was being cast in his direction at the time of writing.

through the holy Virgin, Mother-of-God, and whom we and the holy angels worship in accordance with the Scriptures.

19. And suppose they say that all we need [suggest] is that the Only-Begotten paid us a visit and that because he wanted to be visible to those on earth, to live among men,⁷¹ and to show us the way of the gospel kingdom, he wrapped himself, for the purposes of the divine plan of salvation, in a flesh like our own (after all, the divine is invisible in its own nature). If they so argue, they will be exposed as ignorant of the overall purpose⁷² of the Incarnation and wholly failing to understand “the great mystery of religion.”⁷³ If the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten (that is, his “being-made-man”) had no occasion besides making himself visible to those on earth, then nothing at all was added to human nature, and it would make far more sense for us to adhere to the opinions of the Docetists! They are the wretches who clothe the Word in flesh and an earthly body and tell tall tales about how he became visible as a man on earth. Yet they are easily exposed as having totally missed the truth. If, despite his becoming flesh, the Word of God brought no benefit to human nature, then why not just say that he was entirely free from physical impurity and therefore seemed to be making use of an earthly body to achieve his stated purpose? Then what was the reason for his visit? How did he become man? Why did he do it? We can provide the answers for anyone who cares to ask such questions; in fact, the Holy Scripture will do the teaching. Come, my friend, to where the holy words may be found, apply your mind’s eye carefully to what the holy apostles said, and you will see clearly what you seek. This is what Paul the wise, in whom “Christ himself was speaking,”⁷⁴ said for us: “Since the

71. Bar 3.38.

72. Purpose: *skopos*, a key technical term for Cyril in his understanding of the Bible. Cyril means that the whole phenomenon of incarnation had a goal and an objective that pervades every aspect of it and that is the interpretive key for understanding every part of it. See J. David Cassel, “Key Principles in Cyril of Alexandria’s Exegesis,” *Studia patristica* 37, ed. M. F. Wiles and E. J. Yarnold with P. M. Parvis (Leuven: Peeters, 2001): 413–15.

73. 1 Tm 3.16.

74. 2 Cor 13.3.

children have partaken of flesh and blood, so he likewise also shared in the same, so that through death, he might destroy the one who has power over death, that is, the devil, and set free those who, because they feared death, were held in slavery all their lives."⁷⁵ He also gave us another explanation: "That which was impossible for the law in that it was weakened through the flesh, God [did], sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and on behalf of sin, [and] condemned sin in the flesh, so that the righteous things of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not by flesh but by spirit."⁷⁶

20. After all, is it not totally obvious to absolutely everyone that the Only-Begotten came among us as a complete man in order to set our earthly bodies free from the decay that is foreign to it, and that the saving union was the means by which he injected himself into our own way of life? And also so that by making the human soul his very own he might demonstrate that it was superior to sin, as if he had dyed it like a piece of wool with his own nature's unshakeable immutability? I believe that we need analogies like this when we discuss matters that are so hard to understand; for I am looking at these divine mysteries, which are way over my head, "as if in a mirror and as an enigma."⁷⁷ In fact I think that this [analogy] is especially apposite, since it contains a picture, or rather an accurate parallel. Just as the flesh overcame the power of death and decay because it became the Word's own [flesh], he who gives life to all things, so I would argue that the soul similarly, since it belonged to him who knows no fault, was rooted in its unalterable condition with respect to virtue and remained incomparably stronger than that tyrant sin that has been around us for so long. Christ was the first and only man upon earth "who did not sin and in whose mouth no deceit was found."⁷⁸ He was established as the root and the first-fruits of those who are being transformed into the newness of life in the Spirit. By his grace and through participation [with him], he will bring physical incorruptibility and the absolute security of divinity to the entire human race. Because

75. Heb 2.14, 15.

77. 1 Cor 13.12.

76. Rom 8.3, 4.

78. 1 Pt 2.22.

he knew this, Paul, God's mouthpiece, wrote, "Just as we bear the image of the earthly man, so we shall bear the image of the heavenly man."⁷⁹ The expression "the image of the earthly man" indicates the tendency to sin and the death that has invaded us as a result. But "the image of the heavenly man," that is, Christ, is the certainty of sanctification, the doing-away of death and decay, and the bringing-in of incorruptibility and of life.

21. It was one complete thing with another, the complete Word of God united with a complete manhood like our own—this is what we affirm. There is no conceivable reason why he would favor the better part of us, namely, the soul, while bestowing the experiences of his living among us only upon the body. The mystery of salvation was accomplished on both levels. He made use of his own body, like an instrument, for carrying out bodily activities and its physical infirmities, at least such only as are not immoral, while his own soul experienced what is peculiarly human but not open to condemnation. We are told that he suffered hunger, that he bore with the trials of extensive travel, that he experienced violence and fear, grief and agony, and even death on the cross. He laid down his own soul for us of his own accord, without anyone forcing him to do so, "so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living."⁸⁰ He paid with his own flesh for the flesh of all, a gift truly sufficient, and he made his soul a redemption for the souls of all.⁸¹ And if he took up his life again, that is because, as God, he is life by nature. Hence Peter, God's mouthpiece, said, "My brothers, I am able to speak with you openly about our great ancestor David, that he died and was buried, and that his tomb is with us even until now. But being a prophet, he knew God had sworn to him with an oath to place someone upon his throne who came from his own family, and in so saying he was speaking with foresight about Christ's resurrection, that his soul would not be abandoned to Hades, nor his body to decay."⁸² It would never be ap-

79. 1 Cor 15:49.

80. Rom 14:9.

81. A key anti-Apollinarian argument that may be found in, e.g., ps-Athanasius, *Contra Apollinarem* 1.17 (PG 26:1125).

82. Acts 2:29–31.

propriate to say that the body, once it had been united to the Word, could be overcome by decay or that the divine soul was held fast at Hades' gates since, as Saint Peter said, he was not abandoned to Hades. We would not say that a nature which the mind cannot comprehend and which death cannot capture, namely, the divinity of the Only-Begotten, was escorted back up from the caverns beneath the earth. There is nothing shocking about the Word from God not remaining in Hades since he fills all things and lives among all by the energy and nature of his divinity in a manner that can hardly be described. Divinity cannot be located or enclosed or in any way measured, nor contained in any way at all.

22. What is so paradoxical and universally astonishing is that a body that is naturally corruptible should rise again (for it belonged to the incorruptible Word), while a [human] soul, after being allotted the task of joining with the Word in a unity, descended into Hades and also, by making use of a power and authority that is proper to God, showed himself to the spirits there. Furthermore, he also said, "to those in chains, 'Come out,' and to those in the darkness, 'Be free.'"⁸³ It seems to me that God's mouthpiece Peter was also saying something like this regarding God the Word and the soul that became his own for the sake of the saving union, "for it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good rather than for doing evil; after all, Christ also died once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring you to God, being killed as regards the body, but made alive as regards the spirit, in which," he says, "he went and preached to the spirits in prison, those who rebelled long ago."⁸⁴ I do not believe one ought to say that it was the Only-Begotten's divinity, stripped down and on its own, who descended into Hades and preached to the spirits there, since it is totally invisible (divinity is superior to what may be seen); but I will also insist that [the divine nature] did not merely "seem" or "appear" to transform itself into the form of a soul (this notion of "semblance" is to be totally rejected). But just as he himself had a physical state at

83. Is 49.9.

84. 1 Pt 3.17-20.

the time when he was living among physical people, so when he preached to the souls in Hades he had his own garment, his soul that had been united to him.

23. The way the Incarnation works is profound and cannot be expressed or even grasped by our minds, though that does not mean it is inappropriate to analyze it. Meddling in matters that do not concern us is not without its risks, and it is quite unacceptable to exceed the limits of our own intellects in our questioning and to try to think the unthinkable. Surely you appreciate that this profound mystery, which is far beyond the capabilities of the human mind, ought to be respected with an unquestioning faith. We shall safely leave for Nicodemus and others like him the insane question, "How can these things be?"⁸⁵ while unhesitatingly accepting that through which the divine Spirit has been pronounced. We shall put our trust in Christ, who says, "Truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen."⁸⁶ Let us leave every crazy idea, made-up story, and false opinion, and the delusion of subtle words far behind; let us put aside anything that is likely to be harmful, even if our opponents launch well-honed and pointed arguments in our direction. For our divine mystery "is not by persuasion, using clever words, but in the manifestation of the Spirit."⁸⁷

24. So the Only-Begotten, he who is God and Lord of all just as the Scriptures say,⁸⁸ has appeared to us. When he became a man he was seen upon the earth⁸⁹ and shone upon those in the darkness, but this did not happen simply as an "appearance" (heaven forbid! for it is madness to say and think such a thing), nor did he come close to his body by changing or transforming himself in some manner (for the Word of God exists immutably, remaining always and ever the same), nor was his general existence contemporaneous with the physical existence of his body (for he is the Creator of the ages), nor did he enter a man merely as a "word" without concrete existence or as a simple

85. Jn 3.9.

87. 1 Cor 2.4.

89. Bar 3.38.

86. Jn 3.11.

88. Ps 118.27 (117.27 LXX).

verbal expression. For the one who called into existence what was not and who gave things their beginning must necessarily be pre-existent. For he is the life that issued from the life that is God the Father. Both in reality and in our minds he has his own concrete existence. But he was not wrapped with flesh alone, devoid of a rational soul. No, he was truly born of a woman, and appeared as a man, God the Word, the living one, existing and co-eternal with God the Father. He took the form of a servant, and just as he is complete in his divinity, so he is complete in his humanity. It is not a case of the single Christ, Lord, and Son merely being a juxtaposition of divinity and some flesh, but rather he is paradoxically bound together out of two complete elements, namely, humanity and divinity, into a single individual being.

[F. Dyophysitism]

25. Someone will probably ask at this point, "To whom did the holy Virgin give birth? Was it to a man or to the Word of God?" We reply: that question is wholly misguided; it is in default of what is right and true. As far as I am concerned, you ought not to allow any division after the union, nor may you reshape Emmanuel into two persons by splitting him up individually into a man and God the Word. No one should accuse us of having taken an unorthodox position here since this is just what is expressly condemned by Holy Scripture. As one of Christ's disciples said, "But you, beloved, remember the words foretold by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they said to you, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, people who live in accordance with their own irreverent desires. These are those who, being sensual rather than spiritual, make divisions."⁹⁰ So there is no way there can be any division, especially if it involves talking of "two" after the union or thinking of each separately. It is appropriate for one's mind to sense a distinction between the natures (after all, human and divine natures are not identical), but at the same time as this acknowledgment, the mind

90. Jude 17-19.

must also accept the concurrence of the two into a unity. So, it was as God that he issued from God the Father, and as man that he issued from the Virgin. The Word who shone out from God the Father, in a manner that can be neither described nor imagined, is said to have also been born of a woman, descending into humanity and entering into what was not his own, not with the aim of remaining thus emptied, but rather so that he might be believed to be God and appear on earth in human form, not just as if he were dwelling inside someone but by himself becoming a man by nature while simultaneously preserving his own glory. So God's mouthpiece Paul combines these two things into a unity, namely, the divinity and the humanity, which would otherwise be so far from being consubstantial with each other and which are so utterly distinct, and he makes this combination in the context of salvation-history, and then he demonstrates that there is one single Christ out of the two elements, one Son, one God: "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called out as an apostle, set apart for the Gospel of God, the Gospel which was announced beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, which concerns his Son, the one made from the seed of David according to the flesh, and established as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness."⁹¹ Note carefully that he says that he himself was set apart for the Gospel of God and writes openly that "we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ,"⁹² and again, "for I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified."⁹³

26. After first calling him Son of God, he goes on to say that he was born of the seed of David and to affirm that he was "established as the Son of God." So, then, tell me how is it that one who comes from David's seed can be God? How could the Son, who is before all ages and co-eternal, insofar as he issued from God, be "established" as the Son of God, as if there were some beginning to his existing? After all, he said about himself, "The Lord said to me, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you,'"⁹⁴ where the word "today" indicates, as always, not the past but the

91. Rom 1.1-4.

93. 1 Cor 2.2.

92. 2 Cor 4.5.

94. Ps 2.7.

present. This mystery is surely profound, but those who separate out the parts and divide them up cannot manage it at all, whereas for those who bind Emmanuel together into a unity, the pure knowledge of the holy doctrines is readily comprehensible. The Son, who is co-eternal with the one from whom he issued and who exists prior to every age, descended into human nature, taking up humanity to himself rather than slipping away from being God, and hence he may legitimately be thought of as being born of David's seed and of experiencing a wholly new human birth. What he took up into himself was not foreign to him, but is truly his very own. It is therefore to be reckoned as being one with him, just as one might naturally think of how a person is constituted, a person whose nature is woven from unlike parts, namely, soul and body, but the combined person is still reckoned as a single individual. One sometimes names an entire animal on the basis of just its physical body, but at other times the combined being is meant when the soul is explicitly mentioned. We ought to accept just the same way of talking about Christ, for there is only one Son and one Lord Jesus Christ both before his taking flesh and when he appeared as a man.

27. No, we shall never deny our Master and Redeemer, even when people make a point of his human aspects and the limitation that came with his self-emptying. You see, our Lord Jesus Christ spoke to the Jews as follows: "If you were children of Abraham, you would do what Abraham did. But now you are seeking to kill me, a man who has told you the truth—Abraham did not do this."⁹⁵ Paul talks about this as well: "He [Jesus], in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications to the one who had the power to save him from death, with great cries and tears, and he was heard because of his reverence, and although he was a Son, he learned obedience from what he suffered."⁹⁶ Do we argue from this that Christ is to be reckoned a mere man who is in no way superior to our own nature? Heaven forbid! Do we allow the possibility that God's wisdom and power

95. Jn 8.39–40.

96. Heb 5.7–8.

might have come down to such a level of weakness that he was actually afraid of dying and prayed to the Father for his own salvation? Do we deprive the Emmanuel of being life by nature? Should we not rather, when we think of how descriptions of his humanity and the limitations of having a nature like ours might seem contemptible, do something truly praiseworthy by giving proper recognition to the supra-mundane glory that belongs to him by virtue of his being God, while also realizing that he is at once both man and God, or rather the God-made-man? Paul, who is so reliable for us, got right to the point when he made the following declaration: "We speak wisdom among the perfect, but not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to their end, but we speak the wisdom of God, which is hidden in mystery and which none of the rulers of this age knew. If they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."⁹⁷ And then furthermore, that "the one who, being the reflection of the glory [of God] and the representation of his being, bearing all things by his powerful word, and after making purification for our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in the highest places, becoming as superior to the angels as the name that he has inherited is greater than theirs."⁹⁸ So does not being the "Lord of Glory," and being given that name, imply something far above and beyond everything in the created order that is subject to the processes of becoming? Leaving aside humanity for now (for that is a status of so little consequence), I will say that, even if you counted the angels, or numbered the Rulers, Thrones, and Authorities, even if you called to mind the Seraphim on high, you would surely agree (assuming that you were of sound mind) that they are greatly inferior to the very highest rank of glory. Such an honor is the highest available and must of necessity belong solely to the nature that rules the universe. So how could it be that someone who has been crucified could become the "Lord of Glory"? How could it be that he who is the "Father's reflection" and the "representation of his being," he who "bears all things

97. 1 Cor 2.6–8.

98. Heb 1.3–4.

by his powerful word" is said to have become greater than the angels? It is because, I would argue, when he became a man he accepted a status below theirs. For it is written, "We see Jesus, brought down a little lower than the angels, due to the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor."⁹⁹ So are we to be made to strip the Word, who issues from God the Father, of the prominence that belongs to his being, and of his exact likeness to [the Father], just because he took a status that was lower than the glory of the angels on account of the condescension associated with God's plan of salvation? Not at all! I believe rather that we must neither completely disentangle the Word of God from the humanity after his convergence with the flesh, nor deprive the humanity of the glory that belongs properly to divinity, so long as we think and speak of this as being in Christ.

28. But I am sure there will be people who ask, "Who is Jesus Christ really? Is he a man born of a woman? Or is he God's Word?" It is a waste of effort even to bother repudiating such stuff and nonsense. I would say, though, that splitting man and Word into two separate parts is dangerous and will cause damage. It is excluded by soteriology, while the Holy Scriptures pronounce that Christ is one. I would myself assert that neither God's Word, while separate from the humanity, nor the temple born of a woman, when not united to the Word, can be called "Jesus Christ." For what we think of as Christ is God's Word after it has been ineffably brought together with the humanity in accordance with the saving union. He is above humanity since he is by nature God and Son, but at the same time the fact that he saw fit to bring himself down to the human level does him no dishonor. At one time he said, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father; I and the Father are one,"¹⁰⁰ but then at another, that "the Father is greater than I."¹⁰¹ It was for humanity's sake that he called himself inferior, even though he was not actually lesser than the Father since he is the same in terms of substance and in every way his equal.

99. Heb 2.9.

101. Jn 14.28.

100. Jn 10.30.

29. There are times when the Holy Scriptures speak of him as wholly a man while saying nothing about the divinity (because of the plan of salvation), and then there are also times when it speaks of him as God while saying nothing about the humanity. There is nothing misguided about this because the two have been conjoined into a unity. So then God's mouthpiece Paul, Hebrew of Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin,¹⁰² called to be an apostle,¹⁰³ wrote as follows to those who had been justified through faith and had put to death the material aspects of life (I mean of course sexual immorality, passions, evil desires, and greed):¹⁰⁴ "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."¹⁰⁵ Concerning his own disciples, Christ himself said, "Holy Father, keep them in your name which you gave me, so that they may be one as we are. While I was among them, I kept them in your name which you gave me, and I guarded them, and none have been lost, except the son of destruction—so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now, I am coming to you, and I say these things while I am in the world, so that they may have the joy which is mine made complete in them."¹⁰⁶ Do you understand that it is only the human aspects, those that we share, that are under consideration in these passages? But let us not think that he was somehow hidden or absent from the world, since he wisely says, "Truly I tell you that wherever two or three meet together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,"¹⁰⁷ and again, "Behold, I am with you all your days until the fulfillment of the age."¹⁰⁸ You see that even the most holy Paul frequently felt the need to avoid calling him a man; for example, he said, "Paul, apostle not from men or by men, but by Jesus Christ,"¹⁰⁹ and furthermore, "I am telling you that the gospel I preached is not a human thing, for I did not receive it from a man, nor was I taught it; rather, it came through a revelation from Jesus Christ."¹¹⁰ And in another place he also says, "If we have known Christ according to the flesh, no lon-

102. Phil 3.5.

104. Col 3.5.

106. Jn 17.11-13.

108. Mt 28.20.

110. Gal 1.11-12.

103. Rom 1.1.

105. Col 3.3.

107. Mt 18.20.

109. Gal 1.1.

ger do we know him in that way."¹¹¹ Who, then, is this "Jesus Christ," who struck Paul with such an ineffable and unerring divine revelation of the mysteries about himself? Is he not the Word made flesh, who for our sakes did not disdain being born of a woman? Surely what I am saying is right! Do not forget what blessed Gabriel said to the holy Virgin: "Do not be afraid, Mary; behold, you shall conceive and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus."¹¹² I would argue that this name that the Father bestowed upon the Word via this message from the angel was a new one, as that is just what the prophetic oracle had predicted: "and they will call him by a new name, one which the Lord will give."¹¹³ So, when the Only-Begotten Son, co-eternal with the Father before all ages, became man in these later stages of world history, was born of a woman,¹¹⁴ was established as the Son, and was even given the name of "firstborn" by becoming one among many brothers,¹¹⁵ at that time he who is by nature the Father bestowed his name upon him on the basis, one might say, of a father's rights.

30. So then, the same individual is at once both the Only-Begotten and the firstborn. He is the former insofar as he is God, and he is the firstborn insofar as he is one of us in the way the saving union requires it, one among many brothers, a man. The point of this was that we too, both in him and through him, naturally and also by grace, might become God's children. We become so naturally because we exist in him, and in him alone, whereas we become so through him by the Spirit by participating in his grace. Just as the condition of being the Only-Begotten, which belongs especially to Christ, became a property of his humanity when the latter was united to the Word (a conjunction that occurred in accordance with the plan of salvation), so also in turn did the conditions of being "one among many brothers" and of being the firstborn become properties of the Word after being united to the flesh. Because his being God and his eternal changelessness were firmly established, he remained just what

111. 2 Cor 5.16.

113. Is 62.2.

115. Rom 8.29.

112. Lk 1.30.

114. Gal 4.4.

he was even when he became a man who was crowned with the highest glory and transcendence. This is why the most sacred and blessed army of heavenly spirits has been commanded to worship him just as we do. You see, they would have had reason on their side if they had thought so little of the human condition as to shrink from affording him such honors when he became one of us for our sakes; they would have been scrupulously avoiding any guilt in considering him unworthy of such glory, even though he became like us for our sakes. You see, at that time they still could not understand the mystery about Christ until the Spirit revealed it to them rather than allowing these sacred beings to do anything impious. This is why Paul, who was God's mouthpiece, said, "When he brings the firstborn into the world he says, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.'"¹¹⁶ So then, he whose natural property is to be quite other from the whole universe and who is external to it, came into it; as a man he became a part of it,¹¹⁷ save only that he did not on this account abandon his divine glory. He is thus to be worshiped as the Only-Begotten, even as we call him the firstborn since that is a name admirably well-suited to human finiteness.

31. So are we worshipping Emmanuel as a man, then? Heaven forbid! That would be completely mad, deeply wrong. It would make us no different from those who worship created things instead of the Creator, "who exchanged the truth of God for a lie,"¹¹⁸ as [Scripture] puts it. If we share in their way of thinking, then we will get back the exact same response they did: "Those claiming to be wise became fools and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image like corruptible man and like birds, animals, and reptiles."¹¹⁹ If we were to offer our worship to Emmanuel as if he were just a regular person, someone exactly like us, would not we ourselves become just like these people, both in our actions and in our thoughts, by deceptively exchanging God's glory for an image of a corruptible man?

¹¹⁶. Heb 1.6.

¹¹⁷. "Part of the world": this seems to have been an anti-Apollinarian expression common to a number of Alexandrian authors.

¹¹⁸. Rom 1.25.

¹¹⁹. Rom 1.22-23.

Then what? Would not the very multitude of the angels above be implicated in this madness as well? Furthermore, I reckon this is the inescapable charge of perverseness that we can lay against the mass of the nations. The stigma of this age-old sin of theirs clings to them. You see, I would argue that they are just as much at fault as they ever were and they still have not recognized which is the right path. It seems superfluous that the blessed Paul addressed them thus: "but at that time, not knowing God, you were enslaved to those who by nature are not gods; but now that you know God, or rather are known by God, how can you turn again to the weak and poor elements, which you desire to be enslaved to all over again?"¹²⁰ After all, if the Christ that they have now believed in is not actually by nature God, then what sort of God had they come to know? If they have been worshiping a man, then they have fallen into the trap of the age-old sin. Is that not true? It must be. You see, then, Christ-loving Emperor, it is an assured result of incontrovertible logic, as well as being the wise thing to do, that we should worship the Word, who comes from God the Father, as being very God by nature, even though he looked just as we do, since the concurrence of the two into a unity is quite sufficient to dispel any suspicion that we may have been harboring about him being merely human. The Word's nature took the humanity to itself for sure, but he was not "merely" human. Instead, because his own glory overshadowed the element that he assumed, the Word permanently preserved his divine transcendence without confusing it with the humanity. This is what the disciples had realized when they worshiped him with the words, "Truly you are the Son of God,"¹²¹ even though they could see him walking around in a human body; in reality, he was walking miraculously, as God.

32. An opponent of this doctrine might ask, "Who was it, then, that said to the Samaritan woman, 'You worship what you do not know, but we worship what we do know'?"¹²² and how can we categorize the worshiped together with the worshipers?" But

120. Gal 4.8-9.

121. Mt 14.33.

122. Jn 4.22.

this question of “who” is a very stupid and ignorant one, since it can only refer to the whole Christ. There is no division. He who conversed with the woman was the one and only Lord Jesus Christ, he who is composed from a humanity which enacts worship and a divinity which is worshiped. To put it another way, it is he who genuinely has both God’s being and his name, and has a man’s as well. Insofar as he is God, he himself is to be reckoned as the Lord of Glory; insofar as he is the one who became a man and who has been glorified by God through participation, he asks for this glory by saying, “Father, glorify your Son.”¹²³ It is also written, however, that “there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,”¹²⁴ and so just as there is a single faith, that is, in Christ, and also only really a single baptism, although we are baptized and believe in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so in the same way and for the same reason there is a single worship, namely, that of the Father, of the incarnate Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The Only-Begotten, even when he became flesh, dwelt among us, and was called the firstborn among many brothers, was never deprived of that worship that both we and the holy angels owe him. What further basis can there be for faith in him? Surely this is wholly justifiable. I do not believe that anyone in his right mind would suggest that we have stripped the flesh from the Word that comes from God the Father and then have worshiped the latter on its own.¹²⁵ Let us not miss the chance to say it yet again (since I have said it before), that our faith is not directed at one of our own, towards a man, but towards God, who really is by nature to be found “in Christ’s person,” a point with which the wise Paul was in total agreement when he wrote that “we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus Christ’s sake. For God who said, Let light shine out of darkness, has shone into our hearts to make the knowledge of his glory in Christ’s person visible.”¹²⁶

123. Jn 17.1.

124. Eph 4.5.

125. The image of the pre-incarnate Word as being like a soul that was “naked” before being “clothed” with the body goes back to Philo and depends upon a common philosophical conception.

126. 2 Cor 4.5–6. “Person” (*prosopon*): Paul really means “face” rather than

You can see just how clearly this light, which gives us our knowledge of God the Father, shines in Christ's person, and that is why he also could say, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father; I and the Father are one."¹²⁷

33. The divine representation, however, is not something material, but something that exists only within a peculiarly divine power and glory; in Christ, this is found in its purest form. He thought it appropriate, however, that he should be recognized not just by saying things like this, but he also wanted to exalt the minds of his listeners through the extraordinary nature of what he did, although his visible body made him out to be pathetic in the eyes of those who did not understand. "If I do not do my Father's works, then do not believe in me; but if I do, and you still do not believe, then believe in my works."¹²⁸ I think that Christ said this at the time because he knew that the saying would turn out to be rather appropriate. You see, there were some who thought that he who became a man for us was not actually God by nature, but that he was just a regular person like one of us, and so they made out that it was unacceptable to put one's faith in him. All their uncertainty and hesitation needed to be cut away and their faith directed towards his divine nature, as if it were the very person of the Father, rather than attributing it to human baseness; hence he said that "the one who believes in me believes not in me but in the one who sent me, and the one who sees me sees the one who sent me."¹²⁹ It was as if he had said, "You who are listening to what I am saying, do not have a low opinion of me, like something you have picked off the ground; you should know rather that by placing your faith in me when you see me physically, you are not just placing your faith in a human being, but, through me, you are placing it in the very Father himself; as his Son, I am his equal in every way, even though I have been made flesh for your sake and have taken the base cloak of humanity as my dwelling-place, while

"person," but by Cyril's day the term was a technical one for the person of Christ, and that is how he takes it here in the Pauline citation.

127. Jn 14.9; 10.30.

128. Jn 10.37-38.

129. Jn 12.44.

still retaining undiminished the equality of nature and action that we share, and remaining in exactly the same state of glory."

34. To look at it from another direction, you may be assured that Christ does not reject faith, but rather that he accepts faith in his own person, just so long as it involves no division or distinction, even after the Incarnation. To see what I mean, think of the healing of the man born blind. Christ infused into him a light that was both sweet and unwonted, and quite understandably everyone was truly shocked. After he had been set free from his condition, the Jews interrogated him as to who the healer was, and when Christ later came across him he asked, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"¹³⁰ The other cried out, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?" Christ replied, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking with you," and the man then said, "I believe, Lord," and worshiped him."¹³¹ Yet is it not a fact universally acknowledged that the divine and transcendent nature is wholly invisible, since the Scripture says, "Nobody has ever seen God"?¹³² But had he meant to separate off his humanity and elicit faith in the Word of God the Father, stripped naked, so to speak, and on its own, then why did he not command the healed man to consider that it was the divine nature? Instead of this he focused on his materiality, on what was visible to the eyes, by saying, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking with you." Surely we should admit that he is referring here to his body? Otherwise, in what sense could one think of him as being his flesh unless one thinks of him as being identical with what he made his own by entering into a union with it? It is just the same, of course, when we consider ourselves. Even if someone referred just to the flesh, one would not thereby be intending to give an incomplete or merely partial description of our humanity, that is, our soul and body together.

35. On one occasion the wise John wrote for us that "Jesus also did many other signs in front of his disciples, which are not written in this book; these ones are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, by be-

¹³⁰. Jn 9.35.

¹³². Jn 1.18.

¹³¹. Jn 9.35-38.

lieving, you may have eternal life in his name.”¹³³ What God’s mouthpiece Peter publicly declared to the Jews is just as incredible: “Leaders and elders of the people, if we are being examined today because of a good deed for a sick man, as to how he was healed, know this, all of you and all the people of Israel, that it was in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead—in that [name] does this man stand before you healed.”¹³⁴ And then after that, “Salvation is in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven for men by which we must be saved.”¹³⁵ Who is this one who suffered death, who was raised up in glory, and who came from Nazareth, if he be not Jesus Christ, that is, he who was ineffably begotten from the Father before the ages, but more recently, in the last age, when the end of the world is on its way, has also been physically born from a woman? And so anyone who places his faith in him will receive in return a great privilege, for he will be called God’s child. “However many as received him, to those who would believe in his name, he gave them the power to become God’s children, those born not of blood, nor of physical desire, nor human desire, but of God.”¹³⁶

36. “So that he might be first in all things,” “he was born of a woman,”¹³⁷ but since, through his sacred status, he is the first-fruits of the divinely transformed creation, he was also proved to have been born of the Spirit before all other things. He never had anything to do with the sexual union of man and woman, though he did not condemn that natural act as being dishonorable (after all, “marriage is honorable,” and “the Creator at the beginning made them as male and female”).¹³⁸ Instead, he brought what was human together with something incomparably superior. He wanted us no longer to be reckoned as the children of men, but of the Spirit. After all, he said, “Call none on earth your father; for you have one Father in heaven, and you are all brothers.”¹³⁹ So how could believing in this individual be in any way open to criticism? On the contrary, such faith

133. Jn 20.30.

135. Acts 4.12.

137. Gal 4.4; Col 1.18.

139. Mt 23.9, 8.

134. Acts 4.8–10.

136. Jn 1.12–13.

138. Heb 13.4; Mt 19.4.

receives the reward of sins forgiven. The discerning Paul makes the same point: "Knowing that no man is justified by the works of the Law, but only by faith in Jesus Christ, we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified" in him.¹⁴⁰ I do not at all shrink from saying all over again what I said previously, that Christ Jesus is not to be thought of as God's Word, stripped naked and on his own. On the contrary, once he had taken up the humanity, and once he had woven the flesh to himself without confusing the two, it was then, precisely when he existed in a visible state and with a human form, that the Father revealed him to the holy apostles by issuing a heavenly proclamation that said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am pleased; listen to him."¹⁴¹ You must appreciate that he did not say, "My son is within this individual," precisely so that we would think of him as being one and the same individual, in the context of a union that brings salvation, and not in terms of parts or as if there were one thing within another. John convinces us that it is sinful, indeed extremely dangerous, to believe otherwise; he wrote, "because this is the testimony of God, which he has testified concerning his Son. The one who believes in God's Son has God's testimony within him; the one who does not believe in the Son makes him out to be a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony, which God has testified to concerning his Son."¹⁴² In fact, what he testified was that this individual, who exists together with his flesh and in a servant's form, is indeed his very own unique and special Son. We shall surely concede that the wonderful grace that comes through holy baptism, the fact of becoming alive in him, and the possibility of participating in God through the Spirit's sanctification, are all brought about by Jesus Christ. Remember what John said: "He who comes after me is greater than I, who am not sufficient to carry his sandals; he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire."¹⁴³ Can we really say that to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and in fire could be the work of humanity? How could it ever be so? John spoke of a man who was not as yet present or visible but who would come and baptize in fire and in the Holy Spirit, not by infusing into

140. Gal 2.16.

142. 1 Jn 5.9-10.

141. Mt 17.5.

143. Mt 3.11.

the baptized some spirit that did not belong to him, as if he were just rendering a service, but a Spirit that comes from him and that belongs to him by divine authority, seeing as he is God by nature, a Spirit by which the divine image might also be imprinted upon us. For we are being transformed, as it were, into the divine image, into Christ Jesus, not by being re-configured into a body again (that would be a simplistic way of looking at it), but by being given a share in the Holy Spirit we come to possess Christ himself within ourselves. That is why we show our joy by crying out, "My soul rejoices in the Lord, for he clothed me with a cloak of salvation and a tunic of gladness."¹⁴⁴ He says, "Whichever of you has been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."¹⁴⁵

37. At this point, someone might interrupt us to ask, "Is it the case, then, that we have been baptized into a man? Is that not really how it is?" Well, he will feel our riposte: "Silence, man, what do you think you are doing? Smashing our hopes to the ground?" You see, we have not simply been baptized into some man, but into the God-made-man, into him who frees from their punishment and from their former sins any who have accepted faith in him. This is why Peter, God's mouthpiece, urged the Jews to "repent and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."¹⁴⁶ For in cleansing of their sin all who entreat him, he anoints them with his very own Spirit. In his role as God the Father's Word, he infuses this Spirit and causes it to well up within us from his very own nature, whereas in his role as a man he physically breathed it out in a perfectly ordinary way, doing so for the sake of the salvific purpose of the Incarnation and on account of the union, for he breathed onto the holy apostles and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."¹⁴⁷ John says that "he gives the Spirit without measure,"¹⁴⁸ but it is from his very self that he imparts it, in just the same way that the Father does. That is why Paul, God's mouthpiece, avoids making any real distinc-

144. Is 61.10.

146. Acts 2.38.

148. Jn 3.34.

145. Gal 3.27.

147. Jn 20.22.

tion here and sometimes seems to attribute the Spirit to God the Father, and at other times to the Son. For example, he writes, "You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, such a person does not belong to him; whereas if Christ is in you, even though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit lives because of righteousness."¹⁴⁹ It was appropriate, then, to say that the Spirit belongs especially to the Son, not just insofar as he is the Father's Word, but just as much when one considers him as being made a man as we are, leaving to one side the divine characteristics that belong to his own nature. This is also the reason why we can say that he has been made alive just as we have, even though he is himself the source of life for everything because of his being ineffably born from the living Father. One can nevertheless see that he has graced his own flesh with the glory that belongs to divine activity, but that at the same time he has also made material things his own, as if he had wrapped them around his very own nature, in accordance with the salvation-bringing union.

38. Someone's now going to ask, "Is it really right that he is actually by nature God the Father's Word to descend from heaven and to have the power to grant life to whatever things he wants to receive it?" Well, would anyone seriously try to suggest that the divine ability to create is a human faculty? Of course not! How can it be that, as God, he grants us life, and this not merely by making us partakers of the Holy Spirit, but by actually offering us the flesh that he assumed as something to eat? For he said, "Truly, truly I say to you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, then you have no life in yourselves."¹⁵⁰ There was one occasion when the Jews were railing against him and debating as to who was the greatest. They somehow suggested that it was the blessed Moses and publicly said, "Our fathers ate manna in the desert, as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' What sign will you give that we should believe in you?"¹⁵¹ If, as you claim, you have brought your body down from above, out of heaven, then what

¹⁴⁹ Rom 8.9-10.

¹⁵⁰ Jn 6.53.

¹⁵¹ Jn 6.31, 30.

will you do to prove it? He replied, "Truly, truly, I say to you that Moses did not give you the true bread that comes from heaven; for the bread of God is the one that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."¹⁵² Furthermore, he even pointed directly at himself and showed that he was embodied by saying, "I am the living bread who comes down from heaven; anyone who eats of this bread will live forever, and the bread which I give is my flesh, for the life of the world. The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the Father who sent me lives, so I also live because of the Father, and the one who eats me will live because of me."¹⁵³ And yet, surely his flesh did not actually come down from heaven as such, but came from the Virgin just as the Scriptures say it did? There are all sorts of ways of proving conclusively that it is not the Word as such that is eaten, but rather it is insofar as he has brought the properties of the two natures together into a single individual, a conjunction that was designed to bring salvation. Now Nicodemus did not understand this mystery, and so in his confusion he cried out, "How can this be?" He replied, "If I speak to you of earthly things and you do not believe, how then will you believe if I speak to you of heavenly things? Nobody has gone up into heaven, except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man."¹⁵⁴ But then there were Jews who suffered from the same lack of sense as Nicodemus and who decided to mock him (how could they!) for claiming that his own body was life-giving and came from heaven. To these he asked, "Does this offend you? What if you were to see the Son of Man going up to where he was before?"¹⁵⁵ Surely we agree that the Emmanuel was born of a woman? In which case, given that the body that was united to him had indeed been born of the holy Virgin, where can he have been beforehand, or how could he possibly say that he would return there? For sure, we must concede that it is impossible for an earthly body to have the power to give life, at least insofar as it exists in its own nature? Tell me, then, how could it be that flesh can give life? How can what is of earthly origin also

152. Jn 6.32-33.

154. Jn 3.9, 12-13.

153. Jn 6.51, 56-57.

155. Jn 6.61-62.

be reckoned as being from heaven? Surely the answer is that [these things can be true] because of the union that pertains to the living, heavenly Word. This, I would argue, is the doctrine that is most orthodox and which best accords with the Scriptures. Even when he is being considered in his incarnate state, he is still not other than the divine Creator.

39. I shall again make Paul, who is God's mouthpiece, an accomplice to my argument. He wrote as follows: "giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light, who has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. This Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, because in him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him; and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy, since God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, by making peace through the blood of his cross, whether things on earth or things in heaven."¹⁵⁶ See how clearly [Paul] says that all things were created through him and for him, and also that he is before all things and that all things hold together in him. It also says that he is the firstborn from among the dead, and that he brought peace to things in heaven and on earth through his blood. Who is this "firstborn from among the dead" but Christ Jesus, that is, the Word both in the flesh, together with his flesh? For insofar as his own nature is concerned, as God the Word he could never die, while as a common human being he could hardly be reckoned as the Creator of everything, unless of course it was as God that he enacted creation (so long as one does not think of him without his flesh at any time subsequent to the union), while it was insofar as he appeared as a human being that he was the firstborn

156. Col 1.12-20.

from among the dead (albeit not laying aside his being God on account of the Incarnation).

40. You can see in other passages how the inspired authors confirm these exact points. For example, John says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made,"¹⁵⁷ while Paul says that "there is one God the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things."¹⁵⁸ But if there had been some gulf between the Word and the flesh after their being united to each other, or were there any sort of division into separate items, such as into two sons as some people reckon, then how could all things have been created through Jesus Christ? Yet all things were created through him. It is evident, then, that he retained what properly and by nature belongs to God's Word even after he became a man. Even to think about making a division is to stand on a precipice, for the Lord Jesus Christ is one, and through him the Father created all things. As God, therefore, he is Creator and as Life he is Life-Giver, composed out of both human and supra-human properties into one in-between sort of thing.¹⁵⁹ After all, the Scriptures say that there is a "mediator between God and men,"¹⁶⁰ who is by nature God, albeit not apart from his flesh, and who is also genuinely a man, but not a "mere" man like one of us, since he remained just what he was as well as becoming flesh. After all, it is written that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."¹⁶¹

41. Do we not, after all, believe that in these last stages of history Emmanuel was born through the holy and god-bearing Virgin? Surely this is just what we believe. Now this "yesterday and

157. Jn 1.1-3.

158. 1 Cor 8.6.

159. This intriguing expression became the subject of intense debate about Miaphysite circles in the sixth century; see Iain R. Torrance, *Christology after Chalcedon: Severus of Antioch and Sergius the Monophysite* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1988), 159.

160. 1 Tm 2.5.

161. Heb 13.8.

today," O Christ-loving Emperor, seems to me to refer to the present and the past. If that is the case, then how can he have been "the same" individual in the past before he had come into his fleshly existence? Well, the Word existed in the beginning and was himself eternal and unchanging in his own nature precisely because he was fathered by an eternal and unchanging God. Yet has not this name, Jesus Christ, been used to denote the Word only in more recent times, in fact since the time of the Incarnation? Yes, that is indeed so, as we have already demonstrated in all sorts of ways.¹⁶² Now, take into consideration that he is saying that this individual who is the same yesterday and today and forever is Christ Jesus, and not just the Word on his own. So how is it, then, that a human nature may remain unchanged and possess continuity of identity even while experiencing change, specifically change from non-being to being and life? Have the Holy Scriptures in fact lied to us by telling us that something pre-existed which did not even exist yesterday? I, for one, would certainly not say that, not at all! Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. I will never deny the Word's antiquity and permanence, despite his becoming flesh; instead I would suggest that it is because of the union with his own flesh that he can be referred to as having existed yesterday, that is, to have pre-existence. It is true that the deranged Jew loathed him and tried to stone him because he would not believe it. That witless Jew who tore him to pieces because he refused to believe him and prepared to stone him, was shocked precisely because, although he looked like a regular man like any other, he claimed that he was older than any man; they had said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?" and so, as God, he replied, "Truly, truly, I say to you that before Abraham was, I am."¹⁶³ John also says, "This is the one about whom I said, 'After me comes a man who is in front of me because he existed before me.'"¹⁶⁴ If John knew that Christ was a man (hence calling him Emmanuel), how could he then say that someone who was younger than he and hence "after him" was actually "in front of him" and "existed before

162. See §36.

163. Jn 8.58.

164. Jn 1.30.

him"? You might answer, "As I understand it, when he says that 'he is in front of me and existed before me,' he is thinking in terms of degrees of honor." All right then, but a very brief point will allow me to show that suggestion to be wholly false. If we allow that the words "in front of" refer to having a greater degree of honor, then by the same argument we would have to say that the term "after" surely denotes what comes second in importance. It then follows of necessity that we should, quite foolishly, suppose Christ to be less glorious than John and to have come after him, since he said that "a man is coming after me." What an absurd thing to suggest! This is certainly not our opinion, especially considering what the Psalms say: "Who among the clouds shall be equal to the Lord? Who among God's children shall be likened to the Lord?"¹⁶⁵ It follows that we must attribute to Christ the greater age, even after his Incarnation, since he is by nature God, united to flesh, and because he ordinarily causes the virtues of his own nature to be held in common with those which pertain to his own body.

42. This being the case, then, and being accurately expressed, you could very easily go on and discover the same thing from other sources. There is a place where God spoke through one of his holy prophets concerning the Christ who comes from the seed of David according to the flesh: "And you, Bethlehem, house of Ephratha, you are few in number among the thousands of Judah; for from you will come forth to me one who is to be a ruler over Israel; his coming was from the very beginning, from the days of eternity."¹⁶⁶ The holy Paul said about those Israelites that "they were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ."¹⁶⁷ Surely he is here adjudging that the great antiquity that belongs properly to the Word is to be found in Christ Jesus, in the context of the salvific union. That is clear enough, is it not? He says most specifically that he who came from Bethlehem, insofar as he is a man born

165. Ps 89.6 (88.7 LXX).

166. Mi 5.2.

167. 1 Cor 10.2-4.

of a woman, came forth from the very beginning. For the Word-made-man existed in the very beginning, before time, and he was himself the rock that quenched Israel's thirst with streams of water that they had not at all been expecting, and this even though in the later stages of history he was born, became a human being, and was anointed by God the Father to send his message out into the world. It is only for the latter reason that he is called Christ, and yet, as Paul says, Christ was also the rock.¹⁶⁸ The wise John reinforces this point as well, and strengthens it by not merely allowing the natures to sit alongside one another, but by binding together the functions of the properties that pertain to each. Look at how he puts it: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us."¹⁶⁹ See how he states quite definitely that he who is from the beginning is both visible and tangible. After he had traced out with his finger the side of Christ's body and the lacerations from the nails, Thomas cried out, "My Lord and my God."¹⁷⁰ Saint Luke could also say that the holy apostles had become eyewitnesses and servants of the Word because the incorporeal had become visible and the intangible tangible, not in the sense that his flesh was like some foreign earthly garment, but because he had made it into his very own temple and because he was being revealed as both God and Lord in and with that flesh. You know, do you not, that the holy Paul wrote somewhere that "none of us lives to himself alone, and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living."¹⁷¹

168. This sentence is absent from the ancient Syriac translation and may be a scribal gloss.

169. 1 Jn 1.1-2.

170. Jn 20.28.

171. Rom 14.7-9.

43. We have established, then, that he was made "Lord of both the dead and the living," simply and only because he himself died and was raised to life, and whom else but the Son would we ever describe as undergoing death and then coming back to life? I am sure everyone would agree that nobody else could be so described. What follows from this? Should we conclude that the Word of God the Father is mortal, subject to corruption, or that as Life he is beyond death, superior to corruption? Yet it is abundantly clear to everyone that, as Life, he is superior to death. If that is so, then how can he be both "among the dead" and "free," as the Scriptures have it?¹⁷² For there is no way that the Word could, on his own account, die. Hence we formulate it this way: that his flesh actually died while he himself suffered.¹⁷³ After all, he is not separate from his flesh; he who, in terms of the law of matter and nature, died and was then raised, actually exists within his flesh and has bound to it the glory of his lordship. He thereby proved that death was a peculiarly human experience while resurrection was a work of God. The result of these two aspects is that we know him to be one of us and also, as God, above us; we envision him as the Lord of the universe, a position he held together with his own Father even before the Incarnation. Hence when Nathaniel recognized him, he said, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."¹⁷⁴ To his disciples he himself said, "You call me lord and teacher, and you are right, for that is what I am."¹⁷⁵ He backed this up by what he did, by forgiving sins and "granting power over unclean spirits, to drive them out, and to heal every sickness and every disease among the people."¹⁷⁶ For it was in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth that the man with the crippled foot, who sat at the Beautiful Gate, was healed. And Aeneas was able to shake off his chronic condition and escape a totally incurable illness because Peter, God's mouthpiece, said, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you."

172. Ps 88.5 (87.5 LXX).

173. I.e., the flesh really died, while the Word felt the pain of death without actually dying.

174. Jn 1.50.

175. Jn 13.13.

176. Acts 3.6, 2.

44. So then, because we are driving towards the truth in every direction, because we are absolutely passionate about following the path mapped out by the Holy Scriptures, and because we are in line with the opinions of the Fathers, we may conclude that the individual who came from Jesse's root and from David's seed, the individual who came from a woman according to the flesh, and who, as a man, is as subject to the law as we are (while as God he is above both us and the law), who was "among the dead" like us and for us, who is himself able to bestow heavenly life upon us and who actually is Life, it is this individual who is really, genuinely the Son of God. We do not strip his humanity of its divinity nor divest the Word of his humanity after the ineffable and inconceivable union. Instead, we confess the one individual Son, who ineffably manifested himself as a single individual composed out of both these elements; and to be sure, this happened by a union made in heaven, not by some transformation in his nature.

45. Christ's disciple makes clear just how great a profit accrues to those who hold this position when he says that "whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God."¹⁷⁷ The statement that "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us"¹⁷⁸ proves that Jesus Christ, he who is from David's seed according to the flesh, is also really by nature the Son of God, and the wise John further confirms this by saying that "we know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know the true God. And we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the one that is the true God and is eternal life,"¹⁷⁹ by whom and with whom be glory to God the Father, with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁷⁷. 1 Jn 4.15.

¹⁷⁹. 1 Jn 5.20.

¹⁷⁸. Jn 1.14.